



(U) GCHQ Perspective on Annual Bilat

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(U) Last month saw the annual bilateral meeting held between SID and GCHQ's Operations Directorate. Iain Lobban, GCHQ's Director of SIGINT Operations, sent the following summary to the GCHQ work force and has given his permission for us to share it with the Foreign Affairs Digest audience [reprinted here on SIDtoday].

(U) In mid-January we had our annual Bilat with NSA's Sigint Directorate, led by Major General Dick Quirk. It was one of the best that I can remember so is probably worth a few words.

(U) The Bilat brings together the leads for each element of Sigint Operations. Over two days we covered:

- (S//SI) The strategic missions we each faced -- lots in common as you would expect, so we focused on areas of divergence -- China perhaps the most striking, where GCHQ devotes much less effort than NSA. This is something we are looking at given its strategic significance both now and in the future;
- (S//SI) The need for balance across the board - although CT and SSMO are obviously high priorities, if something goes seriously wrong with Russia or WMD they have world-changing potential!
- (U) Opportunities as a result of the 'Big Idea' - seeking to minimise the use and unintended effect of Eyes Only classifications, to mutual advantage.
- (U) The continuing importance of working with Humint partners: when we get this right, the whole really is greater than the sum of the parts.
- (U) Coherent planning and practice across all elements of the Sigint system; this is actually a strong 5-Eyes, not simply bilateral, push.
- (U) Touchpoints between our own SigMod [SIGINT Modernisation] and NSA equivalents.
- (S//SI) The drive for effective geolocation capability whatever personal comms our targets may be using (GSM, Internet, etc).
- (U) The need to produce more reporting in write-to-release form to allow more usability by our customers and allies.
- (S//SI) Increasingly collaborative working across Sigint and Information Assurance right across the 5-Eyes community as we see more electronic attacks (from both Sigint and IA detection) against our national governmental systems.

(U//FOUO) Clearly all of the above was important but I think the last item was the most rewarding discussion. Huw Rees and Paul Chichester joined us from CESG [Britain's national technical authority on Information Assurance] as did [REDACTED] from NSA's IAD, and we had a rich discussion about what we are seeing, the challenges it presents and next steps. Aligning ourselves within the UK is hard enough -- magnify that by five across our wider community. So the actions we agreed were very focused on the international dimension where we have already had good working level progress: we must build on that urgently and have key milestones set for February, April and July.

(U//FOUO) Since I'm finishing this piece on a 5-Eyes theme, looking ahead to February I'll be

visiting DSD and GCSB for a strategic review of Sigint collaboration, while in April we have a formal Sigint Ops Bilat with CSE. So staff whether within or outside Ops should expect to hear a lot more about what we are up to -- our key drivers, our challenges, our successes. And please ask questions, absorb messages and help spread the word.

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